

Progress Report Documentation

For

Knoxville Area

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Your County Executives Invite You To The

Regional Clean Air Action Summit

April 25, 2003

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

University of Tennessee
Conference Center

Senator Lamar Alexander

Keynote Speaker

Commissioner Betsy Child

Panel Moderator

Congressman Zach Wamp

Luncheon Speaker

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Wamp for fast trains to get economy on track

U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp has come up with the most expensive idea of his career in proposing a way to help boost the economy while greatly improving ground transportation.

The East Tennessee Republican wants to dedicate \$50 billion of the \$350 billion to \$550 billion in proposed tax cuts and economic stimulus actions over 10 years to U.S.



RICHARD POWELSON

development of the newest, fastest high-speed rail systems. He is thinking big - perhaps the magnetic levitation system, which already is in use between Shanghai and its airport, and on test lines in Germany and Japan.

Building such a system in parts of

the country would provide an alternative to the financially troubled commercial airlines and the numerous clogged interstates and provide many new jobs in the steel industry and train car manufacturing industry, Wamp says.

After discussing his idea with some in Congress, he got excited enough to write President Bush last week. He wanted Bush's leadership help to promote the idea.

"You are the bold, dynamic leader to jump start this national transportation infrastructure improvement program to leave the next generation with more options in high speed transportation within the continental United States," Wamp wrote.

Wamp can be an energetic, fast-talking salesman who lays out all the benefits of one of his ideas in very clear terms, making it hard for anyone to argue with him.

Of course, the big negative is the cost - \$50 billion spent over 10 years. But, as salesman Wamp points out, the country cannot afford to keep relying on the commercial airline industry. Everyone will forever remember how terrorists took control of four airliners on Sept. 11, 2001, and used them to destroy New York City's two tallest buildings, heavily damage the Pentagon and kill about 3,000 people.

After that, there were several days of security concerns and no flights - and months of flight cutbacks while many were afraid to fly. Within a year, one or more airlines may go bankrupt, despite federal assistance.

"Maglev" trains, the short name for the magnetic levitation systems, use electricity and magnets to make the train hover slightly above the ground and move along the guidance system.

By eliminating friction from the old system of steel wheels on steel rails and using streamlined cars, the trains can go about twice the speed of conventional U.S. trains.

Wamp was one of the few House members voting in committee against the latest federal bailout of about \$3 billion for the troubled airlines, which won final approval. Part of his objection is the airlines seem like a black hole for federal dollars with no end in sight.

Wamp says he is not pushing the idea for any parochial interest but to help the national economy. It is possible that maglev trains would be built only in some regions outside Tennessee.

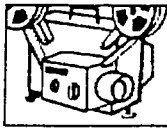
Currently, the only high-speed train in the country, the Acela, operates from Washington, D.C., to Boston, with key markets of New York and Philadelphia along the way. Wamp has taken the D.C.-New York trip several times and enjoyed the 150 mph speed. A maglev train can hit about 300 mph.

But he has heard talk, for example, of the merit of building a high-speed train route from Chicago to Tampa. Such a route could cut through Nashville to Atlanta's airport and on to Macon. If that line paralleled the interstates, it could come through or near Chattanooga, Wamp's hometown.

Wamp sees an opportunity for something perhaps as bold as the 1950s effort to build a nationwide interstate highway system.

A much faster train system, such as the maglev technology or bullet train, could be a good alternative if the costs versus benefits make sense.

Tom Humphrey, chief of the News-Sentinel's Nashville bureau, may be reached at 615-242-7782 or tomhumphrey3@aol.com.



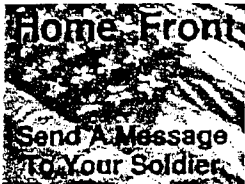
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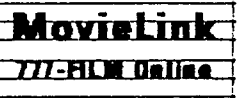
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Woodruff to attend clean air summit

2003-04-21

From Staff Reports



Blount County Executive Beverley Woodruff will be one of 12 regional county executives hosting a Regional Clean Air Action Summit April 25 at the University of Tennessee Conference Center.

Summit attendees will attempt to:

- * Enhance public awareness of air quality issues and actively engage the community in solutions.;
- * Identify pollution reduction measures that will reduce regional ozone formation;
- * Develop action plans to put these measures into place;
- * Set milestone dates for implementation of these action plans.

"It is imperative that we understand this is a regional issue and that we need to work together in order to seek regional solutions," Woodruff said. "I am very pleased that so many county executives are joining together to address this problem."

Eleven other counties will be represented by their respective county executives: Anderson, Cocke, Grainger, Jefferson, Knox, Loudon, Monroe, Roane, Scott, Sevier and Union.

The summit will include an expert panel review of air quality issues in the region. Tennessee Department of Conservation and Environment Commissioner Betsy Child will moderate the panel, which will include TDEC Director of Air Pollution Control Barry Stephens; Chairman of the Knox County Air Pollution Control Board Wayne Davis; John Shipp of the Tennessee Valley Authority; and Great Smoky Mountains National



The special luncheon speaker will be Rep. Zach Wamp.

The summit is free to the public, but requires advance registration. To register, call (865) 637-0251.

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Clean air for Smokies?

Alexander wonders if Clear Skies Act will do enough locally

By MICHAEL SILENCE, silence@knews.com
April 26, 2003

Only Los Angeles and Houston rival pollution in and around the Smoky Mountains, and U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander knows how to get rid of it.

"We could get it done pretty fast," Alexander said Friday in Knoxville. "But the lights would be off, and the jobs would be in Mexico."

Speaking at the Regional Clean Air Action Summit, Alexander, R-Tenn., advocated a balanced approach to tackling the long-documented problem in what Alexander referred to as the Great "Smoggy" Mountains.

Alexander said President Bush's proposed Clear Skies Act is a good framework but "as written, I am not convinced that it does enough to clean the air in the Tennessee Valley."

Knox County Executive Mike Ragsdale and 11 other area county executives hosted the conference, which featured Alexander, U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Chattanooga, and state Environment and Conservation Commissioner Betsy Child.

More than 200 people attended the event, including mayoral candidates Madeline Rogero and Bill Haslam, and they heard a number of experts address the issue.

Speaking to a packed conference room, Alexander cautioned that a balanced approach to reduce emissions that are choking the Smokies will take time.

He likened that balanced approach to a three-legged stool, with the three legs being clean air, good jobs and efficient energy.

"We must keep all three in balance," Alexander said.

Alexander said that while he was campaigning last year, he visited with members of the Pigeon Forge Chamber of Commerce and asked them what is the most important thing he could do if elected.

He said the answer he got was, "Clean up the Smokies."

"Pollution is damaging economic growth. Cleaner air is an issue of better jobs," Alexander said.

He said that according to an Environmental Protection Agency report, last year only Los Angeles and Houston had more days of ozone air violations than occurred in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Alexander said Bush's proposed Clear Skies legislation has the potential to be the most "comprehensive" clean-air legislation in 12 years, but if it were stronger, it would be the most important in 30 years.

Alexander's comments on the act resonated with a member of the National Parks and Conservation Association, which has rated the Smokies the most polluted park in the country.



PAUL EFIRD
NEWS SENTINEL

U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., talks about the air pollution woes of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in an address Friday to the Regional Clean Air Action Summit at the University of Tennessee Conference Center.

"Lamar Alexander always seems to find the front of the classroom," said the association's Don Barger. "He is a son of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and he knows the president's proposal is not enough." With TVA board member Bill Baxter in the audience, Alexander again urged TVA to replace some coal-fired plants with coal gasification plants.

"TVA can play a major role in cleaning the air, but I'm not yet convinced its current clean-air proposals are ambitious enough or yielding results soon enough," Alexander said.

Long term, Alexander advocates pursuing hydrogen-powered vehicles that would emit only water. He also said a planned demonstration project for hydrogen vehicles in three national parks should include the Smokies.

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Air quality must be citizen effort

By MORGAN SIMMONS, simmonsm@knews.com

April 26, 2003

What time of day you mow your lawn and how much you drive are the kind of routine decisions that could determine whether East Tennessee's air meets the new federal ozone guidelines by 2007.

Alan Jones, senior policy analyst for the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, said that in the coming years, as pollution reduction programs at TVA's coal burning power plants begin to take effect, the output of nitrogen oxide, a key ingredient of ozone, will be dominated by mobile sources such as highway vehicles and off-road construction equipment.

"This is why it's so important that these counties are working together on the front end," Jones said. "Convincing people to car pool, to use ethanol - all these individual measures will play an increasing role, because reductions at stationary sources can't do it all."

During a morning breakout session at Friday's Regional Clean Air Action Summit, Jonathan Overly, coordinator for the East Tennessee Clean Fuels Coalition, talked about the benefits of alternative fuels in fighting air pollution and reducing the U.S.'s dependency on foreign oil.

"We spend a billion dollars a week on overseas oil," Overly said. "Let's put some of that back into the U.S. economy."

Overly said each alternative fuel has advantages and disadvantages, and that the ones best suited to East Tennessee include bio-diesel, compressed natural gas, electricity and propane.

He said vehicles that already use diesel fuels might switch to bio-diesel, while light- to medium-duty vehicles that use gasoline might transfer to compressed natural gas, propane or electricity.

"There are more vehicles in East Tennessee than there are homes," Overly said. "For alternative fuels to work, they have to be used in a lot of vehicles. That's why extended support is so important."

Overly said there are a growing number of designated "clean cities" across the country that are seeking federal assistance to advance the use of alternative fuel vehicles and refueling stations.

He said that East Tennessee so far is behind the alternative fuel curve, but that potential financial assistance could come from a \$15 million Clean Fuels Initiative sponsored by U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Tenn., that would help test and demonstrate alternative fuels in transport systems throughout the Southeast.

"East Tennessee has to have a clear, concise message if it wants to develop alternative fuels as a way to clean the air and help the economy," Overly said. "We have to state our case with one voice."

During another breakout session, officials from some of the 30 counties and seven cities in East Tennessee who have signed Early Action Compacts talked about ways to be proactive in taking local pollution control options and educating the public about the dangers of ozone.

The Tri-Cities area of northeast Tennessee, where two years ago health, industry and civic leaders created an "Ozone Action Partnership" to reduce local ozone levels, provided a role model.

Steve Gossett, with Eastman Chemical Co. and a member of the Tennessee Air Pollution Control Board, said Sullivan County had exceeded the ozone standard twice, and formed the partnership to prevent a third, and

final, strike from the Environmental Protection Agency.

"We had already gotten reductions from industry; now it was time for the public to get involved," Gossett

The Ozone Action Partnership began monitoring local ozone forecasts and relaying health warnings to the public by way of the evening news and morning newspapers.

Citizens were told what they could do to mitigate the emission of nitrogen oxide on hot summer days. They were advised to mow their lawns late in the day when there was less sunlight, which is needed to create ozone. Carpooling was strongly advised, and truckers were asked to kill their engines after coming to a stop rather than let them idle.

Last ozone season, despite forecasts to the contrary, the city of Kingsport and surrounding area recorded no days when ozone reached levels considered unsafe for human health.

"We knew we needed to take action on our own," Gossett said. "We knew we couldn't control what blew in, so we concentrated on sources right here at home."

Morgan Simmons may be reached at 865-342-6321.

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Mayoral candidate becomes fan of KAT

Rogero spends week getting around town on buses

By SCOTT BARKER, barkers@knews.com
April 26, 2003

After attending an air-quality summit at the University of Tennessee Conference Center downtown on Friday, Knoxville mayoral hopeful Madeline Rogero walked a couple of blocks to the city bus transfer area on Walnut Street.

As she dug through her purse to check her schedule, Rogero said spending a week riding Knoxville buses has given her a keen appreciation of the quality of service and the concerns of riders.

"They've been on time," she said of the buses she took 24 times during the past week. She said she's met "courteous drivers and wonderful people on the bus."

The city is poised to replace the transfer point - which is nothing more than a collection of glass shelters - with a \$17 million transfer station and retail complex on Gay Street. The Federal Transportation Authority would pay 80 percent of the tab, with the city and the state chipping in \$1.7 million each.

Kathy Darnell, special projects manager for the city, said the transit center would integrate bus and trolley routes, putting KAT in a position to better serve visitors to the city's new Convention Center as well as area residents.

"Our consultants will tell you that anytime you build a facility like this, it will increase ridership 3 to 5 percent," Darnell said.

That would accelerate an upward trend. According to KAT General Manager Mark Hairr, KAT is on a pace to ferry 2.6 million passengers this fiscal year, up 12 percent over last year. The system operates 25 bus lines, four free trolley lines, van service for people with disabilities and special-event services.

"Ninety percent of the trips are for work, school or medical appointments," Hairr said. "Not a lot of leisure riding is going on."

That jibes with the anecdotes riders told Rogero.

"Most of the people I met are doing it out of necessity," she said. "Our challenge is to get more people to ride the bus as an option - as a choice they make."

Rogero timed her week on the bus to coincide with Bike-Walk-Bus Week 2003, sponsored by the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

After waiting about 15 minutes at the transfer point, Rogero climbed aboard the Chapman Highway bus for the ride home. She rode on 13 different routes during the week and managed to get to all her campaign appearances except one via KAT.

During her trip home, Rogero passed out campaign calling cards, shook hands and chatted with her fellow passengers about the bus service.

The other three major candidates to replace Mayor Victor Ashe have also put some thought, if not their seats,



AMY SMOTHERMAN
NEWS SENTINEL

Mayoral candidate Madeline Rogero shakes hands and solicits votes from bus riders Friday as she uses the bus herself to get to her home in South Knoxville. Rogero spent a week riding city buses and was able to depend on bus transportation to get to all but one of her campaign appearances.

into the transit system.

Businessman Bill Haslam, who also attended the air-quality summit, agreed with Rogero that increased bus use would help the environment. He also noted that mass transit could help alleviate downtown's onerous parking problems.

"It does address two of our key issues," Haslam said, adding that parking and revitalization efforts need to be coordinated.

Former Mayor Randy Tyree, who has been active with the "Nine Counties. One Vision." planning process, said the transit center is needed to integrate the bus routes, which tend to serve lower-income areas, and the trolley system, which shuttles people around the center city.

"It strikes me that it would be a very good investment," Tyree said.

Paying for more transit could become more difficult if the economy doesn't improve. The city will subsidize the bus system to tune of \$4 million this year - about 40 percent of KAT's budget. Hairr said the subsidy likely will be cut by 5 percent in order to help close the city's \$10 million budget gap next year.

None of the mayoral candidates said they expect the system to make money.

Even City Councilman Steve Hall, who is the most reluctant on the panel to spend taxpayer dollars, said spending money on the bus system is important because so many people have no other transportation options.

"I don't know of a transportation system anywhere that makes money or even comes close to breaking even," Hall said.

After a short ride across the Henley Bridge, Rogero got off the bus. She made a somewhat perilous crossing of Chapman Highway and walked down Woodlawn Pike to her home. As she walked, she talked about how mass-transit use and environmental concerns are entwined with economic issues like tourism.

"Clean air equals a better economic future for us," she said. "They're not separate issues."

Scott Barker may be reached at 865-342-6309.

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TENNESSEAN

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Saturday, 04/26/03

East Tennessee counties seek ways to avoid sanctions for polluted air

By DUNCAN MANSFIELD
Associated Press

KNOXVILLE — With the most polluted national park in the background, officials from a dozen East Tennessee counties discussed yesterday how they could avoid federal sanctions for their fouled air.

Knox and the other counties lying in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, where summer smog is worse than in most major cities, are not alone.

About 30 counties in eight areas of Tennessee, including the Tri-Cities, Nashville, Memphis and Chattanooga, are at risk of being declared "non-attainment areas" for exceeding new ozone pollution standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency.

These areas have signed "early action compacts" to delay sanctions that could cost them federal highway funds or place limits on their industrial development.

They will have to come up with their own solutions by March, with the aim of reaching their pollution targets by 2007, instead of waiting for the EPA to tell them how to do it.

"It is going to be real tough to get there by 2007 in Memphis, Nashville and Knoxville," said Barry Stephens, director of the state Division of Air Pollution Control. "But we have preserved the option to look at it."

U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., opened a daylong conference for the Knoxville area group by reminding an overflow audience of more than 200 officials that clean air is good business. "For too long we have thought of cleaner air as the enemy of better jobs. That's not necessarily so," Alexander said.

Clean air will help tourism in the Smokies, he said, but it also helps the economy as a whole, making the area attractive to new or expanding businesses.

Noting that pollution has reduced visibility from 113 miles to 25 miles in the Smokies, Alexander vowed to support efforts to reduce pollutants.

"We all know the Great Smoky Mountains are supposed to be smoky, but they are not supposed to be smoggy," he said. "This is damaging our health, damaging our economic growth and damaging the natural beauty of East Tennessee."

The Tennessee Valley Authority is on track to spend \$1 million a day through the end of the decade on pollution controls on its 11 coal-fired power plants, reducing sulfur dioxide that reduces visibility and nitrogen oxide that produces ozone.

While TVA's efforts are helping, they may not be enough to offset the effects of truck and auto pollution, suggested Wayne Davis, a University of Tennessee air pollution expert. The number of

vehicle miles recorded annually in Tennessee, about 73 billion miles in 2003, is growing by 3% a year, he said.

Davis offered several suggestions — additional environmental controls on industry, use of alternative fuels in government vehicle fleets, lowering highway speed limits, installing commuter highway lanes, promoting buybacks for polluting lawn mowers and requiring vapor recovery systems at gasoline stations.

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